

Collection Forum

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Papers

Observations of temperature and relative humidity during cooling and warming of botanical specimens for insect pest control

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An experiment was conducted using a data logger recording temperature and relative humidity (RH) within the boxes of herbarium sheets placed in a domestic type freezer. It demonstrated that this freezer, currently in use at the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) is adequate for achieving and maintaining temperatures required to kill all life stages of insect pests. Times allowed for cooling and warming as well as packaging of specimens are discussed. Eradication of insect pests with this low temperature technique is insured.

Categories of specimens: a collection management tool

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The Canadian Museum of Nature has defined five Categories of Specimens to be used as an aid in collection management. Levels reflect object value based on scientific, cultural and monetary considerations and thus clarify the museum's intellectual and monetary investment in collections. Categories have multiple applications in collection management: as indicators of value they can assist in controlling specimen use; in conjunction with risk assessment they can guide allocation of limited resources.

Disaster planning for a sceptical museum

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The Oxford University Museum contains the zoological and geological collections for the university which number over 4 million specimens. The museum has prepared a number of forward plans which will eventually become components of a full collection management plan. The impetus behind such planning has come from registration requirements. Disaster planning was part of this procedure and a museum disaster plan was produced last year. Apart from the disaster plan itself, there were a number of benefits which came out of the process of producing the plan itself. These benefits included raising staff awareness of associated issues, practical staff training, purchase of materials and tighter procedures for contacting staff out of hours. Such immediate benefits help to demonstrate to sceptical staff the usefulness of such planning.

Applying McGinley's model for collection assessment to collections of recent vertebrates

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Assessment strategies have been proposed for insect collections. However, inherent procedural differences have limited the usefulness of such strategies for Recent vertebrate collections. By starting with methods used for insect collections, and applying modifications derived from trial and error, a system for assessing the condition of vertebrate collections was developed. This assessment system was tested with collections of fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds and mammals. Assessment data were computerized in a spreadsheet format to facilitate a summarization of each collection status as well as task management of collection activities. General concepts and approaches used in this project have broad application, and they support previous contentions that this management tool is a viable mechanism for assessing, describing and addressing collection needs.

Reviews

- STANDARDS IN THE MUSEUM CARE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS, 1992. Crispin Paine, ed. Museums and Galleries Commission, London, UK
- STANDARDS IN THE MUSEUM CARE OF GEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS, 1993 no author, Museums and Galleries Commission, London, UK
- SYSTEMATICS AGENDA 2000: CHARTING THE BIOSPHERE, 1994 and SYSTEMATICS AGENDA 2000: CHARTING THE BIOSPHERE, TECHNICAL REPORT, 1994. Systematics 2000, a consortium of the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, the Society of Systematic Biologists and the Willi Hennig Society, in cooperation with the Association of Systematics Collections.